THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I apologise to you and, through you, to the House for the absence of the Labour Minister. It should normally not happen and I take note of the sentiments of this House and I will convey to my colleagues that Parliamentary work should be given the due priority that it deserves.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question. Shri Motilal Vora.

छत्तीसगढ़ की ओर से कोयला मंत्रालय के पास लंबित आवेदन

*484. **श्री मोती लाल वोरा:††**
श्रीमती प्रेमा करियप्पा:

क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) छत्तीसगढ़ राज्य में लौह, इस्पात, सीमेंट तथा कैप्टिव पावर प्लांटों की स्थापना के लिए कुल कितने आवेदन उनके मंत्रालय के पास लंबित हैं;

(ख) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार केवल 28 जून, 2004 से पूर्व प्राप्त हुए आवेदनों पर ही विचार कर रही है;

(ग) यदि हां, तो कोयला ब्लाकों के आवंटन हेतु 28 जून, 2004 के पश्चात प्राप्त होने वाले आवेदनों पर विचार न किए जाने के क्या कारण हैं; और

(घ) इस भेदभाव के क्या कारण हैं?

कोयला मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (डा. दसारी नारायण राव): (क) से (घ) एक विवरण-पत्र सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

विवरण

(क) छत्तीसगढ़ राज्य में लौह तथा इस्पात के उत्पादन, विद्युत उत्पादन और सीमेंट उत्पादन के लिए कैप्टिव खनन हेतु कोयला ब्लाकों के आवंटन के लिए आज की तारीख के अनुसार कोयला मंत्रालय में 35 आवेदन लम्बित हैं।

(ख) जी, हां।

(ग) तथा (घ) सचिव (कोयला) की अध्यक्षता में लौह तथा इस्पात, विद्युत एवं सीमेंट क्षेत्रों के पणधारियों के साथ 28.6.2004 को एक बैठक हुई थी, जिसमें विद्युत, इस्पात मंत्रालयों एवं

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††यह प्रश्न सभा में श्री मोती लाल वोरा द्वारा पूछा गया।

औद्योगिक नीति तथा संवर्धन विभाग के प्रतिनिधियों ने भी भाग लिया था। इस बैठक में कोयला ब्लाकों के आवंटन की प्रक्रिया को जांच समिति के मौजूदा मार्ग से बदलकर प्रतियोगी बोली देने की प्रक्रिया के प्रस्ताव को सार्वजनिक किया गया। चूंकि आवंटन की प्रक्रिया के प्रस्तावित परिवर्तन में कुछ समय लगेगा, अत: यह निर्णय लिया गया कि 28.6.2004 तक प्राप्त आवेदनों को जांच समिति की मौजूदा प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से निपटाया जा सकता है। तद्नुसार, 28.6.2004 तक प्राप्त आवेदनों को जांच समिति के माध्यम से निपटाया जा रहा है।

Application pending with Ministry of Coal from Chhattisgarh

†*484. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:††
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending with his Ministry for the installation of iron, steel, cement and captive power plants in Chhattisgarh State;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government are considering the applications received before 28th June, 2004 only;

(c) if so, the reasons for not taking into consideration the applications received after 28th June, 2004 for allotment of coal blocks; and

(d) the reasons for this discrimination?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) 35 applications for allocation of coal blocks for captive mining for iron and steel production, power generation and cement production in the State of Chhattisgarh are pending in the Ministry of Coal as on date.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) A meeting was held on 28.6.2004 under the Chairmanship of the Secretary (Coal) with the stakeholders from the iron and steel, power and cement sectors in which representatives of the Ministries of Power, Steel and Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion also participated.

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†† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Motilal Vora.
† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

In the meeting, the proposal to change the process of allocation of coal blocks from the existing Screening Committee route to the competitive bidding process was made public. Since the proposed change of the process of allocation would take some time, it was decided that applications received up to 28.6.2004 could be disposed off through the existing Screening Committee process. Accordingly, applications received up to 28.6.2004 are being disposed off through the Screening Committee route.

SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister how many applications have been received after 28th June, 2004. Secondly, how many blocks have been allotted in the State of Chhattisgarh?

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Sir, after the cut-off date of 28th June, we have received 35 applications from Chhattisgarh State. Sir, prior to that, there are 21 blocks identified in Chhattisgarh. Out of 21 blocks, nine blocks were already allocated and eight blocks are under consideration and letters are going to be issued by the end of May, and four blocks are to be explored. After exploration, these four blocks are also going to be allotted.

SHRI MOTILAL VORA. Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister: Why this sudden change of going for bidding? Earlier the coal blocks were allotted and the meetings were held all the time. But, all of a sudden, this change for going for bidding has come. Why has this happened?

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Sir, it is true that the Government is going to take a decision on bidding. The thing is previously, there was no demand and there was no pressure. As there is a growing number of applications for captive coal blocks, it was felt necessary to change the mechanism of allocation from present Screening Committee process to competitive bidding. There are a large number of eligible applicants and the Screening Committee has experienced some difficulties in making objective allocation of captive coal blocks. So, the proposal for captive coal bidding allocations was first discussed with the stakeholders of power, steel and cement sectors and other representatives concerned on 28th of June, 2004. It was hence decided that all the applications received after 28th June will be disposed of by the Screening Committee, but the Government now is considering competitive bidding process for allocation of coal blocks to all those companies who have applied after 28th June,

2004 because the new policy will always apply prospectively and it applies to all. And I think to accord correct priority, and required quality, required quantity and at the required place, it will be useful and there will be more transparency in bidding.

SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Sir, the question is very clear. why this sudden change? Earlier the blocks were allocated by the Coal Ministry to the different States. I would like to know from the Minister: What is the change now? Are you going to get some more revenue? Earlier, blocks were allocated, now you are going for bidding. So, when you are going for bidding, naturally the revenue will increase. Will the Minister be kind enough to tell me what change it will make?

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Sir, the hon. Member is right. It is a more transparent and objective method of allocation of coal blocks. This is number one. And most dedicated, sincere, financially sound and deserving entrepreneurs will get the coal blocks; number two. Number three; a part of the revenue generated from the competitive bidding process can be utilised for the development of local area. Sir, that is the reason.

SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister as to why a cumbersome and complicated procedure is adopted for clearing the coal projects. Firstly, a series of meetings are held, and then, there is a Screening Committee route, and so on and so forth. This procedure causes delay not only in clearing the project proposals, but the projects too are delayed. So, I want to know what steps the Government proposes to take to remove the bottlenecks in clearing the coal-related projects. At the same time, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether any projects are pending from my home-State Karnataka.

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Sir, it is not related to one Ministry. All other Ministries are involved in decision because it relates to power, steel and cement. All other Ministries are concerned with this. So, a Screening Committee is constituted with the Coal Secretary as its Chairman, and all other Ministries are also involved in that. So, to process a project it takes time. It should get clearance from all other Ministries. So, the Screening Committee is a must. Because of that process only, we are doing it. It is a very clear-cut procedure through which we are doing. We are not facing any bottlenecks or problems.

Number two, regarding Karnataka, she has asked about the pending

projects. Sir, this question relates to Chhattisgarh, but still for the information of the hon. member, I say that for the Karnataka Power Corporation Ltd., we have allotted six captive blocks, and for Jindal Vijayanagar Steel Company also, one block was given from Orissa. KPCL has asked for two more blocks, which they are opting. We received applications after the cut-off date, and they are also going to be considered.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Mr. Minister, Sir, according to the Coal Mine Nationalisation Act, the captive mining is allowed only in cases where power plants are established. Is it within the knowledge of the Ministry that blocks are being allotted to the private companies which have no captive power plants? All blocks are allotted with the assumption that power plants will be established. But power plants have not been established and the coal is being sold in the open market at a cheaper rate in competition with the Coal India Ltd. Do you have any knowledge about that? If you do have knowledge, what steps has the Government or the Ministry taken against that illegal mining?

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Sir, so far as our knowledge is concerned, the captive blocks are allotted only for the captive power usage, and the user should be the captive power user, whether it is cement or power or steel. But you see no captive block is allowed to sell coal in the open market. If at all any information is there, and if the hon. Member brings it to our notice, we will review it very seriously. But there was one case in Nagapur, and he had applied for a captive block saying that he was going to launch a power project. We came to know about it; we gave a notice and we stalled it.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Sir, this is not the case of 'if at all' any information is there. I want to know whether it is within his knowledge. In the Chhattisgarh area itself, openly it is being sold by those who do not have any captive power plant.

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Sir, it is not in our notice. If any information is there and if the hon. Member brings it to our notice, we will review it. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri R.P. Goenka. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI JIBON ROY: See this is how the Ministry of Steel is working! ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri R.P. Goenka. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Sir, through you, I would like to ask the hon. Minister the same question which was put by my previous questioner. Many middlemen get allotted blocks and captive power plants do not get them. For months, they are kept pending. Is it a fact?

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Sir, it is true that since 2002 almost all the applications for captive blocks are pending. After the UPA Government came to power, at the instance of the hon. Prime Minister, we have taken some initiatives. There are 144 pending applications. Out of the 144 pending applications, we have considered 85 applications. By the end of this month, we will clear all the applications.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, this is a serious question. (*Interruptions*)...

श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया: सभापति जी, यहां सारी इंडस्ट्री की बात हो गई, स्मॉल स्केल की बात कोई पूछता नहीं है और कोई सुनता नहीं है ...(व्यवधान)

श्री सभापति: आप बैठिए ... (व्यवधान)

श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया: सभापति जी, यह सीमेंट को दे रहे हैं, स्टील को दे रहे हैं, कैप्टिव माइंस दे रहे हैं, लेकिन छत्तीसगढ़ में कोयले पर निर्भर करने वाली स्मॉल स्केल इंडस्ट्री बैठी हुई है, उसको प्राइवेट में, बाज़ार से कोयला लेना पड़ रहा है। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि स्मॉल इंडस्ट्री के लिए आपका क्या प्रोग्राम है जिससे सारे देश में उसको कोयला मिल सके?

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Sir, I understand the feeling of the hon. Member. Actually, it is because of the supply to the power sector. Out of the total production of coal, 76 per cent is going to the power sector. So, the non-core sector has suffered because of this. At the instance of the hon. Prime Minister, we have taken some initiatives. Ten million tonnes of coal is separately allocated for e-auctioning. Besides that, 18 million tonnes of coal is being given to the core sector. Now, we have requested the power sector to import minimum 10 million tonnes of coal. We are providing that 10 million tonnes of coal to the non-core sector additionally.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, I was coming to the same point of e-auctioning. It is a good practice. Now, what is happening in the small scale sector? I don't know about Chhattisgarh. I know the practice in West Bengal. You please try to understand it. It is not that you are giving

new blocks. Where already small allocations are there, those allocations are being cut and because of e-auctioning or whatever other ways, on higher bidding, it has been given to some other people. With the result, the small scale industries are suffering. They are not getting even the allocated coal which they were getting earlier. This is become a problem. Now, we know that, through e-auctioning business, Coal India can generate some more funds. That is different. Would you please see to it that, through this practice, some other practices are not crept in affecting the small scale industry where allocations are already there? Why should that be cut?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: The whole industry is based on that allocation. All of a sudden, if you cut that allocation, if you reduce that allocation, the small industry will suffer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. He has taken note of your question.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: So many people are suffering. Would you kindly look into the policies of the power sector on this issue?

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Sir, I have taken note of it.

Financial Assistance to Karnataka

*485. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government of Karnataka has sought financial assistance from the Centre to set up an Earth Station and an Incubation Centre in Gulbarga and Belgaum; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the Centre' reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b) Government of Karnataka has approached Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) Bangalore, to set up new STPI Centres with Earth Station and incubation facilities at Gulbarga and Belgaum in